



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES HOUSING ARIZONA
Housing Arizona to Reach Out to Struggling Families

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano announced a \$13.6 million initiative designed to strengthen state efforts to meet the needs of Arizona families and communities hard hit by the economy. ***Housing Arizona***, the name given to the multi-faceted strategy, will expand services to homeowners and neighborhoods affected by mounting foreclosures, and for families and individuals facing homelessness.

“The bottom line is that Arizonans are hurting from the multiple impacts of rising costs for gas and groceries to dwindling home values, and the loss of homes,” said Governor Napolitano. “These resources are expected to address the pressing need of two groups of Arizonans particularly hard hit by the current economy: homeowners facing foreclosure and homeless men, women and children.”

Housing Arizona is supported with funds from the State Housing Trust Fund and includes \$6.1 million to expand existing programs and \$7.5 million in new resources to tackle the growing dilemma of homelessness and mortgage foreclosure. The Housing Trust Fund was created by the state legislature in 1988 to address the growing need for affordable housing across Arizona, and is the only source of flexible funding available for housing and community development, especially in rural Arizona.

The initiative funding, administered by the Arizona Department of Housing, will continue the eviction and foreclosure prevention programs across the state, match federal foreclosure counseling funds, support continued outreach to troubled homeowners, and provide state support to ensure the successful deployment of new federal dollars targeted to assisting neighborhoods severely impacted by foreclosures.

“Recognizing that real action needed to be taken to address homelessness, I created the Interagency and Community Council on Homelessness (ICCH) to bring together state agencies and community leaders to identify collaborative solutions to this complex problem,” Governor Napolitano added. “The Housing Arizona initiative will make it possible to move our efforts to the next level and establish lasting solutions which can help bring an end to this tragedy.”

The new initiative will address homelessness across the state by targeting resources to new development of affordable-permanent housing, some including supportive services to help meet special needs, and expand efforts to assist homeless families in rural Arizona. Efforts also include partnerships between the Department of Housing and other state agencies, including the Department of Health Services to provide housing assistance to Arizonans experiencing severe mental illness, the Department of Veterans Services to help homeless veterans access housing, the Department of Corrections to help bridge ex-offenders back into the community and avoid homelessness, and the Department of Economic Security to help meet the housing needs of homeless youth.

Recent data suggests that more than 16,000 households faced foreclosure in the first six months of 2008. In addition, the annual statewide census identified more than 14,500 homeless people, more than 40 percent who were living on the street in both urban and rural communities.

Fred Karnas, director of the Arizona Department of Housing added, “While the Department will continue to address the broad housing needs of all low and moderate income Arizonans, we are pleased to work with the Governor, the Interagency and Community Council on Homelessness, and our fellow state agencies to aggressively address the critical needs of the thousands of men, women and children across the state who are facing the prospect of losing their homes, or the nightmare of not being able to access safe, decent, affordable housing.”

A fact sheet on ***Housing Arizona*** is attached.

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